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ABSTRACT

This guide was written to complement the publication "Helping Youth Decide," a manual designed to help parents develop effective parent-child communication and help their children make responsible decisions during the adolescent years. The workshop guide is intended to assist people who work with families to provide additional information and insight on communication and decision making skills. It contains an overview on planning and conducting a workshop which would offer parents a supportive environment to learn and practice new skills while benefiting from the experience of peers and experts. Workshop activity ideas are included. Part 1 outlines seven steps for planning a one-meeting workshop for parents or families. Part 2 offers tips on conducting an effective workshop. Part 3 describes six group activities to promote effective family communication and decision making and includes 24 discussion starter cards for use in the workshop or as homework for parents and youth. A resource list for parents and workshop leaders is provided at the end of the guide. (NB)

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ADDITIONAL NASBE PUBLICATIONS

The *Workshop Guide* is the third publication of the Parent Education Project. The first two booklets, *Helping Youth Decide* and its Spanish adaptation, *Decidiendo Juntos*, are designed to improve communication between parents and their adolescent children.

To receive single copies of these publications or additional information about the Parent Education Project, write to the National Association of State Boards of Education.

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Helping Youth Decide:

A Workshop Guide

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Introduction

Adolescence is a confusing time for youth, a time when guidance from parents takes on new importance. But adolescence can also be confusing for parents, who may be unsure how to provide that guidance. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Parent Education Project is designed to give parents the reassurance and practical communication techniques they need to help their children.

The project's first publication, *Helping Youth Decide*, is a 20-page booklet offering parents suggestions on how to talk to — and listen to — their young teenagers, and how to help them make the decisions, large and small, that youngsters face in the critical years before adulthood. This *Workshop Guide* is intended to complement *Helping Youth Decide*, by assisting people who work with families to provide additional information and insight on communication and decision-making skills.

Workshops offer parents a supportive environment to learn and practice new skills while benefiting from the experience of peers and experts. This Guide contains an overview on planning and conducting a workshop, plus workshop activity ideas. Part I outlines seven steps for planning a one-meeting workshop for parents or families. Part II offers tips on conducting an effective workshop. Part III describes six group activities to promote effective family communication and decision making and includes 24 discussion starter cards for use in the workshop or as "homework" for parents and youth. A resource list for parents and workshop leaders is provided at the end of the guide.

In adolescence both adolescents and their parents need support. From children learning to make independent decisions to parents trying to teach and guide youth to counselors and others trying to help parents improve communication skills, all can benefit from the expertise of others. It is NASBE's hope that this guide will be instrumental in strengthening this chain of support.

Part I: Every Step Counts: Planning A Parent Workshop

Planning is critical to any workshop. No matter how well you know your subject, or how eager the participants are to learn, preparation and attention to detail are necessary to ensure the success of your program.

Here are seven steps for planning a one-meeting workshop on family communication and youth decision making.

A. *Know Your Audience*

The initial step is to choose your audience and identify its needs. These needs will help to determine the goals, design, and content of your workshop. If you intend to develop a program for your organization, decide first whether a parent communication workshop is appropriate for the entire membership. If you will be recruiting from the general population, decide who will benefit most from the training you have in mind. You must also decide whether you want the workshop to include only parents or parents accompanied by their children.

Consider limiting the workshop to parents of children of a particular age or families concerned with a single issue. A workshop in which the participants share common interests will help them feel more at ease with one another and will allow you to tailor the workshop content to their specific needs. Presenting the purpose and goals of the workshop in your recruitment efforts will help draw participants with shared interests.

Alternatively, you may identify an already existing group whose members know one another and share some common bond. Churches, community agencies, youth groups, service organizations, or clubs may be interested in a workshop for their members. Identifying people already accustomed to attending meetings or gathering together has the additional advantage of saving you time, energy, and money on recruiting and publicity material.

B. *Design the Workshop*

Developing your own communication/decision-making workshop can be a stimulating and creative challenge. First, determine your goal and objectives. Next, choose the workshop activities that will best accomplish your objectives. Finally, draw up an agenda or time management blueprint.

If you do not have the time to design your own workshop, pre-packaged workshop curricula are available. Ask your local library or community service agencies for recommendations, and consult the resource list at the end of this guide.

A goal is a broad statement of what you hope to accomplish. Your workshop goal should be directly related to the needs of the audience identified in the first step. For example, your goal may be to improve parent-child communication, improve youth decision-making skills, or increase parents' ability to discuss a specific issue with their teenagers.

Your objectives should describe the knowledge or skills you want the participants to learn in the workshop session in order to achieve the goal. Your objective might be that parents be able to use the "I message" communication technique (see Activity II) or that parents and children will use the decision-making model to make a decision together (see Activity VI).

When choosing activities to accomplish your objectives, keep in mind that people learn in a variety of ways and from many sources. Some people learn by reading, others by listening, and most by *doing*. During a workshop, parents or parents and youth will learn from both the planned activities and each other. Many parents attend workshops seeking support, reassurance, and feedback from peers. By planning a variety of passive and active events and including both presentations by workshop leaders and activities requiring parent interaction, you can accommodate these learning differences.

The activities you select must be carried out in an order that encourages effective learning. With careful planning, each activity can relate to those around it — building on those that came before and preparing the participants for those to follow. For example, you might schedule a brief presentation on active listening followed by an activity that allows participants to practice that skill.

It is also wise to alternate listening and participatory events. No one wants to sit and listen for hours. Nor is it an effective way to learn. Build in a "seventh-inning stretch" by allowing a five-minute break at least every 90 minutes. Planning activities so participants can move from one location to another, and in and out of group settings, also builds interest and holds attention.

Each activity must be allotted a time frame. List every agenda item and estimate their time periods. Then add at least 15 percent additional time to each. Then, if a stimulating group discussion is under way, you will have leeway to finish without feeling time constraints. If the schedule runs smoothly, without unexpected interruptions, you can finish early or extend the time spent in an activity that proves to be especially effective.

When you have finished the workshop design, review it with your goals and objectives in mind. Can you accomplish the goals and objectives realistically this way? Is there sufficient practice time for working on skills? Will people be willing to attend a workshop of this length? At what points could the time demands be difficult to meet? Can a presentation be shortened and still include the same content?

At this planning stage, another important issue is how many participants to accept. Will the workshop design allow for 20, 30, 50, or 100 participants? The number of participants can affect the rest of the planning process, which includes the budget, the room size, and the number of workshop leaders needed. If you think demand will be great, set a maximum number of attendees and decide whether additional workshops should be scheduled.

One way to control the number of attendees is to adopt pre-workshop registration by asking your potential audience to mail registration forms or register by telephone. A cut-off date for these registrations allowing you sufficient lead time will ensure that all final preparations can be made.

C. *Select an Advisory Committee and Develop a Planning Schedule*

An advisory committee with broad membership can be an asset in securing materials, assisting with publicity, and accomplishing the variety of tasks necessary to hold a workshop. Most importantly, the advisory committee should develop an action plan, specifying each step or activity

necessary before, during, and after the workshop. The plan can be written in chart form specifying each activity, the time by which it must be accomplished, and the individual responsible for the task. The action plan is, simply, a checklist of what must be done, when and by whom. It ensures that no detail is forgotten.

Establishing an advisory committee is also a good way to draw members of the community into the project. Invite people from your organization, local businesses, community agencies, the school system, or the like. At or before the first committee meeting, tell members the workshop goals, objectives, and design, as well as any preliminary decisions made about the potential audience. Advisory committee members can offer more enthusiastic and knowledgeable help if they have been thoroughly briefed.

D. *Establish a Budget*

Workshop costs may include publicity, honoraria (small payments or gifts) for speakers, refreshments, photocopying or reproduction of materials to be handed out, supplies, room rent, and printing. Local businesses may contribute some services. Since donations are often tax-deductible and provide favorable publicity, restaurants or fast food chains may supply beverages and snacks for non-profit activities. Schools, churches, and fraternal or community groups may donate space for the workshop. Volunteers may be willing to draw posters, type programs, or provide other valuable services. For costs that cannot be covered by your organization or through contributions, a small registration fee can be charged.

E. *Determine the Date and Location*

The importance of choosing the right date and location can be forgotten among the details of planning a workshop. Such common-sense considerations as avoiding holidays and summer weekends, if overlooked, can result in disappointment for all involved. Remember to check the community calendar for meeting times of other organizations and agencies that might conflict.

Several factors should be considered in choosing a site that is convenient and accessible: Is your audience familiar with the location? Is it near public transportation? Is it large enough for anticipated attendees but not so large it's cold and impersonal? Is there room to move about during the activities? Is it well-ventilated and well-lighted? Can you control the temperature? A comfortable location will help keep the participants' attention focused on the program.

F. *Select the Workshop Leaders*

While organizational ability and familiarity with the community are essential for the workshop planner, the workshop facilitator or leader must have in-depth knowledge of the specific workshop topics. In this case, the ability to demonstrate the communications and decision-making skills is especially important. Knowledge of adolescent development and family dynamics will be critical. Previous training experience and an understanding of how adults learn can also be very useful.

If the workshop planner is not knowledgeable and experienced in these areas, select a workshop leader or leaders who are. Many school psychologists, guidance counselors, social workers and community-based family youth workers receive training in these skills as part of their professional preparation and are likely to make effective leaders. Other community members have developed these skills informally and may also make very capable workshop leaders. Consult the resource list at the end of this guide for books that describe the characteristics of a good workshop leader.

G. *Publicize the Event*

After you have identified your likely audience, the participants must be persuaded to come. Is there a newspaper read regularly by the likely participants or a radio station to which they listen? Are there mailing lists that cover the audience you want? News releases, TV and radio public service announcements, newspaper ads, flyers, and posters in supermarkets or malls can reach likely participants. If you have the time and willing volunteers, consider calling or writing to potential participants. Personal contact and invitations are most effective.

Consider announcing the workshop at meetings of such groups as parent-teacher organizations or service clubs or putting an announcement in their group newsletters. People often prefer not to attend functions alone. If the workshop is announced at other gatherings, friends can make plans to attend together.

Part II: Leading Adult Learners: Facilitating A Parent Workshop*

Leading or "facilitating" a workshop entails more than lecturing on a given topic. Workshops are participatory events and, therefore, the reactions, experiences, and feelings of the attendees are important. Facilitating a workshop involves helping participants to suspend their usual ways of thinking and behaving so they can explore and try out new behaviors.

Workshop leaders are responsible for imparting their knowledge of communication and decision making and for ensuring that the atmosphere is conducive to learning that information. Understanding how people learn may be helpful. The process of learning involves (1) being exposed to previously unknown information, (2) making mistakes in trying to use the new knowledge, (3) feeling awkward when demonstrating the new skill, and finally (4) feeling the pleasure and pride of reaching the stage of competence. This process, in the early stages, can cause anxiety and embarrassment, especially in adult learners who fear being seen as less than completely capable by the leader(s) or their peers. A sensitive explanation of the learning stages and the feelings to be expected may help participants feel at ease and make them willing to try out new skills. Emphasizing that the goal is *learning*, not perfect performance, gives everyone permission to experiment during the skill-building activities.

Here are some other tips to keep the workshop running smoothly:

Before the Meeting

- Chairs arranged in a large circle encourage active participation by everyone and make you, as the leader, more a part of the group. Another option is to have participants seated in groups of six to eight at round tables arranged in a horseshoe, with you at the open end. This too promotes participation and discussion and allows smaller face-to-face grouping that many people prefer to one large group.
- Test equipment and set out materials ahead of time. Trying to thread a temperamental film projector or searching for a three-pronged adapter while your audience waits will escalate your anxiety and lose participants' attention and confidence. Be prepared for the arrival of unregistered attendees, and bring along extra materials and registration forms.

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* If this is the first time you have conducted a workshop, several good resources and reference materials discussing training techniques, learning theory, and group dynamics are available. (See the workshop leader resource list at the end of the guide.) You may also wish to invite someone who knows training techniques to help you lead the workshop.

- Welcome the participants. Members of the advisory committee or volunteers may wish to greet people as they arrive and hand out name tags and materials. A participant who feels welcomed begins the workshop with a positive attitude.

Opening the Meeting

- Begin with a clear statement of the topic and the workshop goals. Review the agenda briefly, explaining the purpose of each segment and what you expect participants to learn or be able to accomplish by the end of the meeting. Be realistic about your goals. Check with the group to ensure that your expectations and theirs match. If a participant expresses an expectation that cannot be met during the workshop, say so. If possible, suggest a resource to meet that need.
- Explain what's expected of participants to maintain a supportive learning environment. This may include rules to assure confidentiality, to promote attentive listening, and to prohibit any display of criticism. Encourage the group to add other rules or ideas. Posting rules in full view contributes to a sense of group ownership and allows you to refer to them throughout the workshop.
- Conduct informal around-the-room introductions to give group members a chance to get to know each other and provide you with insight on their needs and concerns. Many skilled leaders find that one way to put a group at ease is to ask participants non-threatening questions about themselves. Asking questions of the participants confirms that you are interested in who they are and what they have to say. If you share your personal experiences, participants are more likely to do the same.

During the Meeting

- Respect for other's values is essential when leading a participatory workshop. You need not hide personal views, but you should present your ideas in a low-key and tactful manner. An overbearing, judgmental leader will intimidate participants and stifle group discussion.
- There is no simple technique for handling the occasional attention-seeking disrupter, but a general rule is to confront the problem immediately. If not, it may become an even bigger problem. Provide a succinct paraphrase of what the disrupter has been saying. Then thank the person for having shared his or her thoughts, and say that you would like to listen to the ideas of others. If necessary, speak to that person privately during a break, and repeat your desire to provide everyone an opportunity to speak.
- Asking open-ended questions of the audience is a good way to encourage group discussion. Questions that stimulate thought about workshop concepts help establish the personal applicability of the workshop information. Questions should be precise enough to help focus discussion, yet open-ended enough that participants don't feel trapped or constrained. If you are uncertain whether everyone understands a concept, it can be useful to invite someone to give his or her interpretation. Avoid putting people on the spot with specific, one-answer questions that risk making participants feel stupid or inadequate.
- If the group is too large for general discussion, ask each person to turn to a neighbor and spend two minutes sharing views on a presentation. Alternatively, ask several participants to volunteer one-sentence reactions to a presentation.

- Parents are often skeptical of "expert" answers that do not take into account their unique family lives. If given at all, advice should be general. Challenge participants to apply the concepts presented; encourage them to consider alternative approaches that might help.
- Moving from large group activities to working groups of six to eight changes the pace and enlivens the meeting. In the more intimate setting, members may feel more at ease and each will have a chance to speak and participate. Give the groups a topic to discuss or a problem to solve. Groups should work together for 5 to 30 minutes depending on the difficulty of the topic or problem assigned. Then ask each group to select a reporter to inform the larger group of its solutions or conclusions. If each group has a flip chart and felt-tipped pen, its work can be displayed for all the groups.

Closing the Meeting

- At the end of the workshop, quickly review and summarize the activities and objectives. This will help you and participants remember what has been learned.
- Ask participants to fill out a brief evaluation form. This will tell you what participants learned and what was less than valuable, and provide information about how to improve subsequent workshops.

THE ART OF FACILITATION*

- People need to know they are being heard.
- People need to sense they are all equal and important members of the group.
- People need to feel accepted.
- People need to feel a sense of trust and safety in the group.
- People need to know that their life experiences are an important and valuable resource to be drawn upon and shared for their own learning.
- People need an atmosphere where they can be taken seriously, while at the same time allowing for laughter, humor, errors, and flexibility.
- People need the opportunity to evaluate their learning and express their satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or suggestions for future improvement.
- People need to believe they are engaged in a meaningful and important activity.
- People need to know how a learning activity relates to "real" situations.
- People need to have control over how they spend their time.

* Adapted from: Dale, Duane, with David Magnani and Robin Miller. *Beyond Experts: A Guide for Citizen Group Training*. Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts, Citizen Involvement Training Project, 1979.

Part III: Practice Makes Perfect: Learning to Communicate

The activities are the main ingredients of any workshop. Hands-on, practical exercises give the participants an opportunity to apply what they have heard and to practice new techniques and skills. Part III contains six group activities to aid you in designing the "working" section of your workshop and 24 discussion starter cards to help participants practice what they have learned.

Each of the group activities reinforces a communication point made in *Helping Youth Decide*. The first three activities emphasize effective ways of talking to teenagers. The next two activities highlight the importance of both accurate speaking and attentive listening in conversation. The final activity teaches families how to make responsible decisions together.

Some of the activities are for parents alone, while others are appropriate for both parents and their children. Each activity can be used by itself or in combination with others, depending on the audience, objectives, and workshop format. Some activities may, of course, have to be adapted to fit your workshop purpose.

The 24 discussion starter cards are for use by parents and youth together, either in the workshop or at home, and are designed to encourage continued dialogue. The cards are divided into three sections: Life in the Family; Opinions, Opinions, Opinions; and The Meaning of Family.

ACTIVITY I

Scripted Dialogue

When someone is tired, in a bad mood, or not really listening, he or she may react with responses that block communication. This exercise will help participants recognize responses that may cut off further conversation. Scripted dialogue is an easy type of role playing in which very short scripts are acted out and discussed by group members.

Objective: To identify language and attitudes that block communication
Participants: Parents, unlimited number
Room Arrangement: Seating to accommodate groups of six and large group discussion
Time: 40 minutes
Materials: One set of three scripted dialogues for each group of six; a flip chart, newsprint or chalkboard; copies of *Helping Youth Decide* for all

Procedures:

1. Divide the participants into groups of six. Ask each group to divide into pairs. Distribute the three scripted dialogues to each group, asking each pair to take one script.
2. Have each pair act out their script for the other four members of their group. After each script is read, have the two "actors" describe to the group their feelings as they played their roles. Allow the groups to continue through the scripts until each member has had an opportunity to read a part and discuss his or her reaction. (Where there are fewer than six members in the group, ask volunteers to play a second role.)
3. Reconvene the larger group. Ask participants (1) what they think the "parent" in each script is feeling and (2) what the "parent" is communicating. Ask for alternative responses to the ones given in each scenario. Write the alternative responses down in full view of the participants.
4. Refer participants to pages 7 and 8 in *Helping Youth Decide* and have them label the types of responses given in the scripts (e.g., probing, pacifying, blaming, preaching). Compare the alternative responses the group generated with the material on pages 7 and 8 and ask if any items on the list you have written reflect responses that are threatening, preaching, blaming, etc.

Scripted Dialogues

Dialogue I

Youth: (excited) "You should see Joe's house. It's really cool."
Parent: "When were you there? Were his parents home?"
Youth: "Joe had a group of us over after school. I don't know if his folks were there. Anyway, they have this stereo system that's terrific."
Parent: "Who else was there? What exactly were you guys doing at Joe's house?"

Dialogue II

Youth: (despondently) "I didn't get the part in the school play. I wanted it so badly."
Parent: "Oh, there will be other plays."
Youth: "But this is the most important play of the year. I told everyone I was going to get the role. I'm going to be so embarassed."
Parent: "Don't worry. You'll feel better in the morning."

Dialogue III

Youth: (eagerly) "Can I use the car? I promised Lynn I would pick her up tonight."
Parent: "Are you crazy? It's storming out!"
Youth: "I'm a good driver. I've driven in the rain before. Besides, I promised Lynn."
Parent: "You should have asked me first. You certainly weren't thinking."

ACTIVITY II

Role Playing "I Messages"

Having someone tell you about techniques for improving communication is one thing, applying them yourself another. This is especially true when you wish to use a technique during an emotional moment. Giving parents an opportunity to practice communication techniques in a safe and supportive environment (a dress rehearsal, so to speak) increases the probability that the techniques will be remembered, practiced, and used appropriately during more difficult circumstances. The following activity lets parents become comfortable using the "I message." ("I messages" emphasize *your* feelings and thoughts instead of *their* behavior. Examples can be found on pages 10–11 of *Helping Youth Decide.*)

Objective: To learn and practice "I messages"
Participants: Parents, unlimited number
Room Arrangement: Seating to accommodate working pairs and large group discussion
Time: 30 minutes
Materials: One copy of "I Message" scenarios for each pair of participants; copies of *Helping Youth Decide* for all

Procedures:

1. Discuss the concept of the "I message," explaining the purpose and giving several examples. Review the material on pages 10 and 11 of *Helping Youth Decide. Youth Decide.*
2. Have parents form teams of two. (For an odd number of participants, arrange one group of three.)
3. Have each team determine who will play the role of the youth and who will play the role of the parent in each scenario. Give a copy of the written scenarios to each "youth."
4. Explain that the "youth" player will describe or act out a situation to which the "parent" should respond with an "I message." The response should describe clearly how the "parent" is reacting to the behavior. The "parent" can describe what he or she sees, feels and thinks, but should avoid criticizing or insulting the "youth."
5. Have the partners take turns playing the roles of parent and youth.
6. Reconvene the group and ask questions about the difficulties encountered in the parent role, the feelings the actors shared while in that role, the body language that was exhibited by the person playing the role of parent, etc. Ask each person to identify silently a recurring personal situation in which an "I message" might be used.

"I Message" Scenarios

Scenario I:
At 4 p.m., Leslie is about to go out to play in a neighborhood baseball game. Early that morning her dad had asked Leslie to mow the lawn. The lawn has yet to be mowed. Leslie says, "I'm going to the game. I'll mow the lawn later — first thing tomorrow at the latest."

Scenario II:
Paul is playing "drums" on the dining room table and making other disruptive noises. His sister is trying to do her homework nearby and his dad wants to concentrate on balancing the checkbook.

Scenario III:
Terry is reading the newspaper at the breakfast table before school. She glances up at the clock and realizes that the bus is long gone. "I've missed the bus, mom," she says. "Now I guess you'll have to let me take the car."

Scenario IV:
At 10 p.m., Karen comes running downstairs. "I promised I'd bring cookies to the marching band's bake sale tomorrow, and I forgot all about it! Do you think you could whip something up?"

Scenario V:
Mrs. Jackson has repeatedly asked Mike to make his bed and pick up his room. But when she goes to his room to drop off his laundry, there isn't a clean place to put it down.

Scenario VI:
Juan was supposed to be home at 11 p.m., but he doesn't make it in until midnight. "Sorry I'm late, dad," he says, "but we were at Pete's house and we forgot about the time."

Scenario VII:
Sandy and his parents are getting ready to go to Parents' Night at the high school. As they prepare to leave, Sandy appears wearing a tee-shirt with the sleeves ripped off and a safety pin in one ear.

Scenario VIII:
Sheila has been sprawled out in an armchair watching television for four hours and it is a beautiful Saturday afternoon.

ACTIVITY III

What You Say and How You Say It*

Often it is not *what* is said but *how* it is said that conveys the message. Non-verbal actions, tone of voice, and choice of words have a big effect on what is heard. This activity can help people become more aware of what they already know intuitively about others and apply that knowledge to themselves and their interactions with their children.

Objective: To increase awareness of the effects of non-verbal cues, tone of voice, and demonstrated respect and trust on communication.
Participants: Parents, youth, or both; unlimited number
Room Arrangement: Seating to accommodate working pairs and large group discussion
Time: 30 minutes
Materials: Chalkboard or newsprint; copies of *Helping Youth Decide* for all

Procedures

1. Separate the participants into two groups. Ask each participant to choose a partner from within his or her group.
2. Ask the partners in Group 1 to tell each other about a time when they *agreed* with what a person had said to them, but felt intimidated, resentful or put down because of *how* it was said.
3. Ask the partners in Group 2 to describe to each other a time when they strongly *disagreed* with someone but enjoyed the interchange, even though they didn't "win."
4. Allow five minutes for the partners to talk to each other. Then bring the total group back together.
5. On chalkboard or newsprint, form two columns titled "Painful Communication/ Group 1" and "Pleasurable Communication/Group 2." Ask volunteers from each group to tell what they felt good or bad about in a situation — and why. List the reasons in the appropriate column. (Groups usually need very little introduction or coaching to identify the concepts of trust and respect present in the Group 2 stories.)
6. Refer participants to the three paragraphs on page 10 of *Helping Youth Decide:* Show Respect, Be Brief, and Be Aware of Your Tone of Voice. Ask them to think how the suggestions there and the items on the "painful" and "pleasurable" lists you've written can be applied to communication with family members.

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* This activity has been adapted from: Biagi, Bob. *Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively.* Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978. Used with permission.

ACTIVITY IV

Two-Way Communication*

When parents lecture their children without allowing for questions or comments, the point of the lecture may not always get through. Following the adage that children should be seen and not heard can result in a lot of miscommunication. This activity explores the differences between one-way and two-way communication.

Objectives: To demonstrate the advantages of two-way communication
Participants: Parents, youth, or both; unlimited number
Room Arrangement: Seating so that participants face the demonstrator, but so that it is difficult to see the drawings each participant will do during the activity
Time: 45 minutes
Materials: Two sheets of blank paper and a pencil for each participant; three tables prepared by the facilitator on newsprint; felt-tipped pens; copies of Diagrams 1 and 2 for each participant.

Procedures:

1. Explain to the group that they will be examining the outcomes of one-way versus two-way communication.
2. Ask for and select three volunteer assistants, one as demonstrator and the other two as observers to take notes on the behavior of the demonstrator and the participants.
3. Distribute blank paper and pencils to participants. Ask them to label one sheet Diagram #1 and the other Diagram #2.
4. Give the demonstrator a copy of Diagram #1 (see page 26) and allow two minutes of study. Explain to the group that the demonstrator will give directions for drawing a series of squares and that each should construct the diagram as described. The participants cannot, however, ask questions or make comments during the demonstration. Communication will be one-way only.
5. Position the demonstrator in front of the participants with his or her back to the group. The demonstrator should be standing so that the participants cannot see the diagram being used. Ask the demonstrator to describe the squares. Instruct participants to work as individuals throughout the exercise. Clock the time the demonstrator takes to complete the description and enter on Table #3 (see page 25).
6. Ask the participants to estimate the number of squares they have drawn correctly and record the estimates on Table #1.
7. Next ask the same demonstrator to describe Diagram #2 to the participants. This time the demonstrator should stand facing the group and the participants can make any comments and ask as many questions as they choose. The demonstrator should answer, but no hand signals should be allowed. Again, enter the elapsed time for instructions on Table #3.
8. Ask participants to estimate the number of squares they have drawn correctly and record the estimate in Table #2.
9. Thank the volunteer demonstrator for his or her assistance and distribute copies of Diagrams #1 and #2 to the participants. Have the participants com-

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* This activity has been adapted from: Pfeiffer, William J., and John E. Jones, eds. *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*, Vol. I. San Diego, California: University Associates, Inc., 1974. Used with permission.

pare their diagrams with those used by the demonstrator. Ask for a show of hands and fill in the "actual" sections of Tables #1 and #2. Compute the averages for "estimated" and "actual" correct squares and complete the remainder of Table #3.

10. Discuss the differences between one-way and two-way communications in terms of time, accuracy, level of confidence, and emotional reactions to each of the diagraming sessions. Ask the observers to report the differences they noticed. Make use of the observers' comments to stimulate the discussion. Thank the observers for their assistance.
11. Ask participants to compare their conclusions about this exercise to their experience with communications between parents and youth.

Diagram I: One-Way Communication

Instructions: Study the series of squares below. With your back to the group, you are to direct the participants in how they are to draw the figures. Begin with the top square and describe each square in succession, taking particular note of the relationship of each square to the preceding one. No questions are allowed.

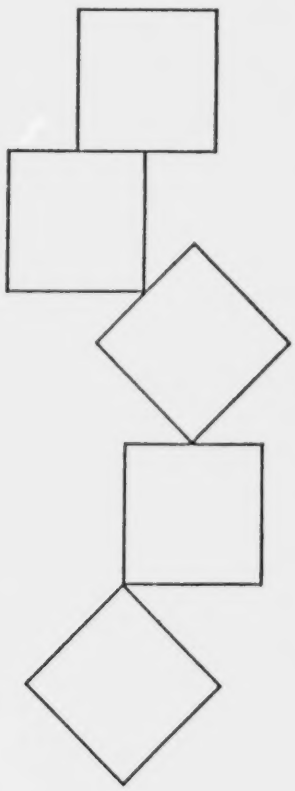
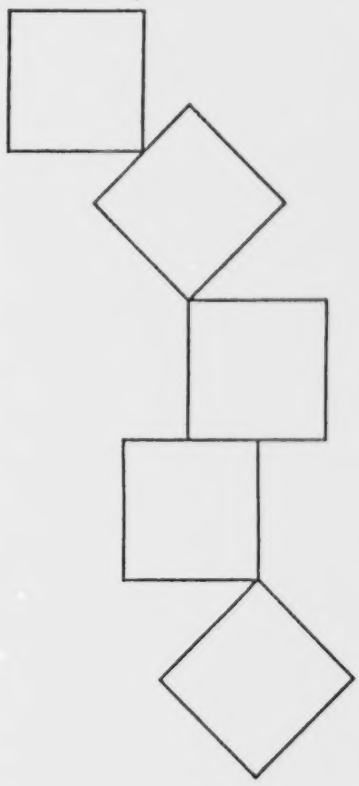


Diagram II: Two-Way Communication

Instructions: Study the series of squares below. Facing the group, you are to direct the participants in how they are to draw the figures. Begin with the top square and describe each square in succession, taking particular note of the relation of each square to the preceding one. Answer all questions from participants and repeat if necessary.



Two-Way Communication Tables

TABLE 1
(for Diagram I)

Number Correct	Estimate	Actual
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		
0		

TABLE 2
(for Diagram II)

Number Correct	Estimate	Actual
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		
0		

TABLE 3
(Summary)

	Diagram I	Diagram II
Time Elapsed		
Estimated Average		
Actual Average		

ACTIVITY V

The 30-Second Clock

When adults converse there is usually a give and take. With adults and teenagers, discourse may not always be two-way. Parents, in an effort to transmit their years of experience and hard-gained wisdom, may resort to preaching or lecturing. While their advice is certainly valuable, it may not be heard when conveyed in a preachy manner. We all pay more attention to what is being said if we are participating in the conversation. Learning to convey information in an effective manner is one of the most difficult tasks of parenthood. This exercise encourages participants to *listen actively* to one another while communicating their own views on a matter.

Objective: To practice listening while also communicating opinions
Participants: Parents and youth, unlimited number
Room Arrangement: Seating to accommodate working groups of three and large group discussion
Time: 30 minutes
Materials: One discussion sheet for each participant; watches with second hands; copies of *Helping Youth Decide* for all

Procedures:

1. Divide the participants into groups of three with at least one parent and one youth in each group. Ask one youth and one adult from each group to volunteer for the first discussion. The remaining member of the group is the timekeeper.
2. Distribute topic discussion sheet to each participant. Ask if each group has a watch that indicates the seconds; lend a watch to each trio that does not.
3. Explain that the goal of this activity is for each parent and child to discover the necessary information about the other while accurately communicating his or her own views.
4. Ask the parent to choose a topic from the discussion sheet. Parent and youth should then ask questions in order to fill in the answers. As the parent begins to talk, the timekeeper should start timing with the watch. When the youth begins to talk, the timekeeper should time him or her in the same way. If either person speaks longer than 30 seconds, the timekeeper calls "Time" and the other person must begin talking.
5. After three minutes, stop the discussions. (Do not tell the participants ahead of time about the three-minute limit.) After the first topic, ask participants to switch roles so the timekeeper may participate.
6. Convene the total group and ask questions to identify what was learned during the activity. Did the teams get the necessary information about each other? Did all the team members contribute equally during the exercise? Did some team members fill in more or less of their forms than others? Did anyone have difficulty speaking less than 30 seconds at a time?
7. Refer participants to page 9 in *Helping Youth Decide* for other pointers on listening. Several discussion rules are also listed on pages 17 and 18 for families to practice good conversation techniques at home.

The 30-Second Clock Discussion Sheet

Topic I: What is your taste in music?

What type of music does your (parent) (child) like?_____

What characteristics about the music does he/she like?_____

What does your (parent) (child) think about your favorite music?_____

What music characteristic does he/she most dislike?_____

Topic II: How late should a teenager be allowed to stay out at night?

Who does your (parent) (child) think should make curfew decisions?_____

What factors does your (parent) (child) think are important when making the decision?_____

What time does your (parent) (child) think is a fair deadline to be home?_____

How would your (parent) (child) prefer that the curfew be enforced?_____

Topic III: How do you envision your future?

What does your (parent) (child) think he/she will be doing in 10 years?_____

Where does your (parent) (child) think he/she will be living?_____

What does your (parent) (child) think about your plans?_____

ACTIVITY VI

Making A Decision

We each make hundreds of decisions every day. Most, however, are repetitions of decisions made before (like what to wear or eat) or are decisions of minor consequence. In making these choices, there is little conscious thought about the decision-making process. But the decision-making process can be extremely important when the decision is new or significant. This exercise is designed to help parents and youth understand and acknowledge the steps involved in making a decision.

Objective: To learn and practice the steps involved in decision-making
Participants: Families, unlimited number
Room Arrangement: Seating to accommodate working family groups and large discussion
Time: 25 minutes
Materials: One copy of Decision-Making Chart and of Decision Story sheet for each family; chalkboard or newsprint; a copy of *Helping Youth Decide* for each family

Procedures:

1. Divide the participants into groups by family.
2. Distribute the Decision Chart and *Helping Youth Decide* to each family. Ask the participants to turn to page 12 in the booklet and review together the steps to responsible decision making. Explain each item on the Decision Chart.
3. Distribute a decision story sheet to each family group. Have each family choose one story to which they would like to apply the decision-making process. Have each family fill in the Decision Chart, making sure that every member participates. Explain that the goal for each family is to reach its decision by consensus, each member accepting and supporting the outcome.
4. Reconvene the group and ask members to discuss what was learned during the activity. List the major points on a chalkboard or newsprint. Ask participants what difficulties they experienced during the process, and ask how they might overcome these difficulties.

Decision-Making Chart

THE FACTS

What are the facts surrounding the decision you are facing?

THE ISSUE

What is the specific decision you must make?

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

What have you learned from other experiences that are relevant to this issue?

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

What are the possible choices open to you?
What will be the results of choosing each alternative?

I. _____ II. _____ III. _____

FEELINGS, BELIEFS, FAMILY VALUES, SOCIETAL VALUES

Examine your feelings about each alternative and consequence.
How do the alternatives fit with your values?
What does our society consider acceptable behavior?

THE DECISION!

Decision Stories

Story 1

Laura, a senior, wants to go to college, and must choose between several schools. She can attend the local community college where her brother and best friend are enrolled. She has also been accepted at a prestigious school 400 miles from her home. She is eligible for student loans and her parents have volunteered to help, but tuition to the more distant school will be a hardship on her family. Her other choice is the state university that her parents attended. This school, only an hour's drive from home, has offered her a partial scholarship. Laura is unsure about what she wants to study and even more uncertain about where she should go. Where should Laura attend college?

Story II

The senior prom is next week, and Bruce wasn't planning to go. The young woman he wanted to take already had a date, and he doesn't think he'll have fun going with anyone else. But this morning a new student in government class invited him to go, and he has to make up his mind fast. His friends say, "You *can't* miss the prom. Everyone else will be there." And his mom tells him, "Who knows? Maybe you'll be surprised and have a terrific time." But renting a tuxedo and buying flowers to spend an evening with someone he hardly knows doesn't seem very appealing to Bruce. Should Bruce go to the dance?

Story III

You (either parent or youth) are driving alone in a rural area when your car breaks down. You do not recall when you passed the last home or business. Cars pass by only about every five minutes. What are your alternatives? Consider all the possibilities, then limit them to the three most likely alternatives. Follow the steps on the decision chart to reach a decision.

Discussion Starter Cards

Here are 24 cards with scenarios, questions, and discussion topics to help parents and youth practice the skills learned in the workshop. The cards are designed to be flexible and can be used to supplement other activities, to illustrate points made in a lecture, or assigned as homework.

The first 12 cards, entitled "Life in the Family," describe typical parent-adolescent exchanges. Parent and child are asked to role-play the characters in the scenarios and to try to reach an understanding about each hypothetical problem. Since imaginary situations are generally less threatening, the scenarios make it easier for parents and youth to focus on creative, joint problem-solving.

The next six cards, "Opinions, Opinions, Opinions," ask family members to share views on topics they may not normally discuss. By exchanging opinions on aspects of their lives not related to the family, parent and teenager may begin to see each other as more complete and knowledgeable human beings.

"The Meaning of Family," the final section, highlights what parent and child find valuable in their family. The cards reinforce the positive aspects of family life to help parents and children see normal conflicts in perspective.

In the workshop setting, the discussion cards can be the basis of a small group activity. The 12 scenarios can be read aloud and analyzed for solutions, and the six "Opinions, Opinions, Opinions" cards used as ice-breakers to help adults and youth begin sharing views and beliefs. Participants can be asked to volunteer responses to the six "Meaning of Family" cards to accentuate the positive aspects of family relationships in general.

If you decide to assign the cards as homework, be sure to explain the purpose of the exercises and go over one or two cards to show participants how best to use them. You may suggest that parent and youth choose one question to discuss each morning for a week to practice the communication and problem-solving techniques learned in the workshop.

Life in the Family 1

Getting home from a party late one night, Patrick is confronted by his mother.

"You've missed your curfew by an hour and a half," she says. "That's the last party for you this month."

"But mom," Patrick protests, "it wasn't my fault. Eric and Lacey had to stop and . . ."

His mother cuts him off. "I don't want to hear any excuses. You should have at least called. You knew when to be home, and you were late."

Imagine you are Patrick or his mother. In either role, identify the feelings you have in this situation. Explore together different solutions to the problem. What is the most acceptable solution that takes into account the feelings of both of you?

Life in the Family 2

Hanging Joanna's coat up in the closet, Mr. Williams notices an open pack of cigarettes sticking out of one of the pockets. When his daughter comes home for dinner, Mr. Williams confronts her.

"I found these in your pocket," he says, holding up the cigarettes. "Are they yours?"

"Yeah, they're mine," the fifteen-year-old admits. "Anyway, it's no big deal. Practically everyone I hang around with smokes once in a while."

"So now you have to do everything your friends do?" Mr. Williams explodes. "What kind of reason is that?! *You* alone are responsible for your decisions. You had better start thinking for yourself."

Imagine that you are Joanna or her father. Discuss the feelings and reasons behind each of your statements. Talk about the reasons people do and do not smoke. As Joanna or Mr. Williams, what will you do next?

Life in the Family 3

Nora has played on the varsity soccer team for two years. But this semester her grades have started to slip. One night, her mother and father sit her down for a talk.

"You're putting more time into your soccer than your schoolwork," her father says. "We've talked it over, and we think you should quit the team until you pull your grades up."

"If you make me quit what I love best about school," Nora threatens, "I'll just quit studying altogether."

Imagine you are either Nora or her parents. If your role is Nora, explain the reasons and feelings behind your threat. If your role is her parent, explain the reasons behind your decision. Then work toward a solution that everyone can live with.

DISCUSSION STARTER: Life in the Family

On the reverse of this card is the beginning of a typical family situation. The stage is set for you to finish acting out the story. The parent can play the father or mother in the story, and the teenager the son or daughter, or you may wish to reverse roles. While playing your role, try to understand your partner's viewpoint and begin to work toward an agreement.

Please keep these special rules in mind:

1. Listen. Follow the discussion and weigh the points being made.
2. Try not to interrupt. Ask questions to clarify the reasons and feelings underlying the parent's or youth's actions.
3. Be respectful of each other.

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National Association of State Boards of Education

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Life in the Family 4

Mr. Smith grabs Lisa's arm as she walks in the door.

"I had an interesting call from your school today. It seems that you haven't been to math class all week." He shakes his head. "I sure would like to hear why you think you can't spare sixty minutes of your day for math."

"My teacher is totally boring, dad," Lisa says. "And it's not like I'm ever going to use all those stupid formulas he puts on the blackboard anyway. What difference does it make if I miss a class once in a while?"

Imagine you are either Mr. Smith or Lisa. If your role is Mr. Smith, try to explain — without preaching — why you think attendance is important. Work together to reach an understanding.

Life in the Family 5

"Why don't you clean up your room, Brian?" Mr. Green asks. "I can hardly get the door open with all your junk piled up on the floor."

"Just keep the door closed and don't worry about it, dad," Brian says. "I'm the one who lives in there, and I think my room looks fine the way it is."

Imagine that you are either Mr. Green or Brian. As Mr. Green, do you think Brian's suggestion is a good one? What family values come into play? In your roles as Brian and his father, work toward an agreement by sharing your thoughts, feelings, and plans for future action.

Life in the Family 6

"Can I go out with Melissa tonight?" Sheila asks. "We're meeting some people downtown."

Mrs. Jones shakes her head. "Melissa? You know what I think of the way she behaves. I'm sorry, but I just don't want you two hanging around together."

"You're not being fair, mom," Sheila argues. "You hardly even know her. And anyway, just because Melissa acts some way you don't like doesn't mean I'm going to go out and act the same way. It's really me you don't trust, not Melissa."

Imagine that you are Sheila or her mother. What will you do in this situation? Discuss the feelings and reasons behind each of your statements first.

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Life in the Family 7

Duane works at the drugstore everyday after school. His parents think he should save all the money he's making for college, but Duane has his eye on a used car first.

"I've earned that money," he reasons. "I should be able to spend it the way I want."

Imagine you are either Duane or one of his parents. What reasons can you think of for saving the money? For buying the car? In your role as Duane or his parent, offer compromises that might resolve your differences.

Life in the Family 8

Carlos goes to his dad's house one weekend a month, and they always try to spend Saturday morning fishing. Lately, however, Carlos' sister Margaret has been asking to come too.

"I don't see why not," Mr. Reyes says. "We'll make it more of a family affair. It might be fun for you to teach her how to cast and tie flies."

"But I don't want Margaret to come, dad," Carlos says unhappily. "Our fishing trips should be just for the two of us. When else do we spend time together?"

Imagine you are Carlos or Mr. Reyes. Discuss your feelings and thoughts about this situation. In your role as Carlos or Mr. Reyes, what alternatives can you offer that would address the feelings of each of you?

Life in the Family 9

Anne and Jimmy are kissing in the kitchen when her father walks in.

"Anne," Mr. Brown reprimands, "the middle of the kitchen is hardly an appropriate place for this kind of behavior."

Anne responds, "Would you rather have us making out in some car? If you just knocked first, there wouldn't be any problem."

In your role as either Mr. Brown or Anne, what would you say or do next? Can you offer suggestions on how to avoid a similar confrontation in the future?

DISCUSSION STARTER: Life in the Family

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Life in the Family 10

Mrs. Cohen calls from the kitchen, "Mike, get in here! I asked you to take out the garbage this morning but you haven't budged from the television set for hours. Everyone is doing their chores but you."

"Just chill out for a minute, mom. It's overtime in the Cowboys-Giants game," Mike shouts back.

"I'm sick and tired of waiting for you, Michael," his mother says wearily. "You've been procrastinating all day. Don't make me ask you again."

"I said I'd do it," Mike says testily. "Why do I always have to operate on *your* schedule?"

Imagine you are Mike or his mother. What can each of you do to resolve the immediate problem? How can you avoid such a situation in the future?

Life in the Family 11

Mr. White has come home from work an hour early and finds David and his friend each drinking a beer.

Mr. White is furious. "Is this what goes on when I'm not home? I guess I was wrong when I thought I could trust you."

David apologizes quickly. "I'm sorry, dad. I know you don't like me to drink, but it's not like we're trashed or anything. How big a deal is one can of beer?"

Imagine you are Mr. White or David. What will you do and say to resolve this conflict?

Life in the Family 12

Grace and her mother are shopping for school clothes.

"Look, Mom!" exclaims Grace. "I *have got* to have those red shoes."

"I think you're a little too young for those heels," answers Mrs. Chung, turning over one of the shoes. "And especially at this price!"

"Practically all my friends are wearing heels, but I'm still stuck in these ugly flats," Grace complains. "Face it, mom. I'm not in elementary school anymore."

Imagine you are Grace or her mom. In your role as Grace, how important is it to be like "the other kids." In your role as Mrs. Chung, what are your feelings about the shoes? In what ways could you negotiate when shopping for clothes?

DISCUSSION STARTER: Life in the Family

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DISCUSSION STARTER: Family Life Story

On the reverse of this card is the beginning of a typical family situation. The stage is set for you to finish acting out the story. The parent can play the father or mother in the story, and the teenager the son or daughter, or you may wish to reverse roles. While playing your role, try to understand your partner's viewpoint and begin to work toward an agreement.

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Opinions, Opinions, Opinions 1

People choose friends for a variety of reasons. One friend might be chosen for her spirit and sense of humor, another because he is kind and trustworthy.

What do you think are the most important qualities in a friend? Do you look for the same qualities in same-sex and opposite-sex friends? Make two lists: one of the qualities you think important in male friends, the other list of qualities important in female friends. Next circle two qualities that make you a good friend. Compare your list with your parent's or child's list and discuss the reasons for your choices. Remember that different people value different qualities. It is OK if your lists are not the same.

Opinions, Opinions, Opinions 2

Improving education is a hot topic these days. Almost everyone has a different idea about what changes should be made.

Discuss your view of your own education. If you were free to change any aspect of your education, what would it be? If you were elected to the school board next week, what would be the first thing you'd like to see changed in your school district?

Opinions, Opinions, Opinions 3

People use many types of drugs in our society. These drugs range from aspirin to alcohol to heroin; some are legal and some illegal. Drugs can be beneficial, harmful, or both.

List or name the drugs in your home. How often are they used? List the purposes drugs fill in people's lives. Which of these purposes do you think are legitimate reasons to use drugs?

DISCUSSION STARTER: Opinions, Opinions, Opinions

On the reverse of this card is a description of a topic important in many people's lives. Share your feelings about the topic with your parent or child and be sure to take the time to listen to his or her views. At the end of your discussion, try to summarize your parent's or child's views. Express these ideas directly to your partner to see if you have correctly understood each other. It is not necessary for both of you to hold the same opinions.

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Opinions, Opinions, Opinions 4

"Money can't buy happiness" is a popular saying. But it's also true that most people need some material possessions in order to be happy.

What material things, if any, do you think people need in order to be happy? How important a factor is money in making a person happy? List the items you own that hold a great value for you. Now mark those items that did not cost much money. If you were marooned on a desert island, which five items would you most want to have with you? Compare your list with your parent's or child's list.

Opinions, Opinions, Opinions 5

In Japan, workers often consider their first job a sort of marriage, and stay with that employer most of their work lives. In the United States, people generally have several different jobs and employers during their careers.

Do each of you expect to have more than one job over the next ten years? Identify all the jobs each of you might like to do. Which would you most realistically expect to hold, given your education, skills, and opportunity, in the next five years? Which are more likely in the long term? How are you preparing for any of those future jobs?

Opinions, Opinions, Opinions 6

Your morals, values, and beliefs influence the big and small decisions you make every day. Having a clear understanding of what you believe and cherish is especially helpful when faced with a difficult choice.

What values do you hold most important in your life? Is religion a major source of these values? What besides religion has influenced your values? Identify three rules you would like to live your life by. Share these rules with your parent or child and explain the values and reasons behind each rule.

DISCUSSION STARTER: Opinions, Opinions, Opinions

On the reverse of this card is a description of a topic important in many people's lives. Share your feelings about the topic with your parent or child and be sure to take the time to listen to his or her views. At the end of your discussion, try to summarize your parent's or child's views. Express these ideas directly to your partner to see if you have correctly understood each other. It is not necessary for both of you to hold the same opinions.

Please remember these special rules:

1. Describe clearly the reasons, beliefs, and values underlying your opinion.
2. Listen closely to what the other person is saying. Try not to think ahead to your next comment while the other person is talking.
3. Be respectful of each other.

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The Meaning of Family 1

Think about what the word "family" means to you. What qualities come to mind when you hear someone say "family?" What family members do you picture in your mind (mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, step-parent, aunt, cousin)?

Share your meaning of "family" with your parent or child. Think of a family from a TV show, book, or movie with which you are both familiar. Discuss how your images of "family" are similar and different from the fictional family.

The Meaning of Family 2

Think about the things you like best about your family as a whole and about each family member. If you were to be separated from your family for one year, what would you miss most about each family member? What needs do you have that are filled only by your family?

Share your thoughts with your parent or child. Do you both value some of the same things? Some different things?

The Meaning of Family 3

Often when parents are together, they speak about their children. And children frequently speak about parents. Think of something nice that a friend of yours has said about your child or parent.

Share that comment with your child or parent. Next, share one positive thing you have said to a friend about your family.

DISCUSSION STARTER: The Meaning of Family

On the reverse of this card are questions about your life and your family. Share your personal thoughts and feelings about these issues and be sure to listen to your parent's or child's views. At the end of your discussion, you should better understand what your child or parent thinks is valuable.

Please remember these special rules:

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The Meaning of Family 4

Think about how people in your family show you that they love you and respect your ideas and opinions. How do you convey your appreciation for others in the family? Is it important to you to have your family vocalize their feelings, or is knowing that they care enough?

Describe how you express your feelings of love and appreciation to your family. Listen to your parent or child describe how he or she tries to communicate these feelings to you. Do you usually understand when the other person is trying to express these feelings? If not, what would help you to understand?

The Meaning of Family 5

Picture one of the happiest times you have had with your family. Spend a few minutes thinking about what specific things made this time worth remembering.

Describe in detail this memory to your parent or child. For example, describe where it occurred, who you were with, the time of year, etc. Listen to your parent or child describe his or her memory.

The Meaning of Family 6

Think about your family life five years ago. What has changed since then? How do you relate to others in your family now as compared with five years ago? How have the roles of different family members changed? How has your role in the family changed? What changes do you anticipate in the next five years?

Write a one-page letter to your parent or child describing one thing you prefer about your family life now, one thing you miss from your family life five years ago, and one change you expect in the future. Read each other's letter and discuss the changes each of you predicted.

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RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

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The National Association of State Boards of Education is a nonprofit, private association that represents state and territorial boards of education in forty-eight states, five territories and the District of Columbia. Our principal objectives are to: strengthen state leadership in education policymaking; promote excellence in the education of all students; advocate equality of access to educational opportunity; and assure responsible lay governance of public education.